



Ashanti Hamilton

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1st District Alderman

Winter Newsletter 2006

Dear 1st District Residents,

This is a busy time of year for you and the Common Council, but I wanted to wish you a happy holiday season and peaceful new year, and to update you on a number of important issues affecting the city and its residents.

Property taxes. Crime. Sanitation. Those are issues that you and I face and we must work together to address those challenges.

In this newsletter you'll find information on:

- Tough 2007 city budget decisions
- An anti-violence campaign.
- My Community Standards Initiative.
- Job opportunities in the district.
- Grants to maintain your home.

There are many other informative articles inside this newsletter, and I've also included a opinion survey so you can let me know how I'm doing as your representative. As always please don't hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions or concerns about our neighborhoods and the city.

Sincerely,

**Ashanti Hamilton,
Alderman - 1st District**



One Call For City Info...286-CITY

That one number can connect you with 21 departments, 8,800 employees and 100s of city services, ranging from building permits to parking permission to library hours to garbage pickups.

The City of Milwaukee receives millions of calls annually for services and information, and finding the right number for city services can be difficult and sometimes overwhelming for residents. Ald. Hamilton says the city continues to seek ways to improve communications with residents, and this one-stop number for city services makes it even easier to find the right department and person to handle your complaint or request.

Residents will still call 911 for emergencies but can use the new number for any other calls. The system is in both English and Spanish. Of course you can always call Ald. Hamilton's office at 286-2228.

Alderman Hamilton's Committee Assignments

Chair

- City Information Management Committee

Vice-Chair

- Judiciary & Legislation Committee

Member

- Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development Committee
- Community & Economic Development Committee
- Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Board
- Library Board

Uphold Community Standards

"With a consistent effort, any neighborhood can change for the better," said Ald. Hamilton. That is the idea behind his Community Standards Initiative, a set of neighborhood guidelines to promote public safety efforts and reduce crime. But after identifying neighborhood problems and having police, building inspection, sanitation and other departments work to address them, what's next?

Ald. Hamilton answered that question by actually becoming a neighbor and moving to the 5100 block of N. 39th St., an area which has seen many serious and violent crimes and calls for police. "When problems arise in a neighborhood, the answer to improving the situation and sustaining any progress is to work as closely as possible with those trying to improve the area," said Ald. Hamilton, "And my Community Standards Initiative and decision to move to the neighborhood are having some success."

"The quality of life in our neighborhoods depends on mutual respect and concern," the alderman said, "And we all must uphold a community standard." Ald. Hamilton's Community Standards Initiative includes some neighborhood behavior guidelines:

- **Noise can be an intrusion – please use common sense.**
- **Car horns/alarms are only to be used in emergency situations.**
- **Refrain from vulgar, violent or abusive language.**
- **Drive carefully, obey speed limits.**
- **Keep our neighborhoods clean from trash, overgrown weeds, etc.**
- **Drugs will not be tolerated and police should be notified of drug activity.**
- **Maintain your home whether it is owned or rented.**
- **Report suspicious activity to police and report & remove graffiti.**
- **Our children are our future, they need the care & concern of everyone.**

Ald. Hamilton has taken numerous walking tours of the 1st District to promote the standards and they will resume in the spring.

KEEPING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE AND CLEAN

There's Help For Major Home Repairs

If you own your home and meet low income requirements, you may qualify for a grant that would pay for major home repairs, according to Ald. Hamilton. The **Neighborhood Improvement Project (NIP)** focuses on repairing building code violations on the properties accepted for the program. A city inspector determines the type and quantity of repairs to be done.

"Many city homes have been repaired over the years by this program," said Ald. Hamilton, "and over time, it has become one of the most successful housing rehabilitation projects that use Community Development Block Grant funds.

This is not a do-it-yourself remodeling program. Repairs are done professionally by the agencies that are contracted to meet city code requirements. This is a forgivable loan program for low-income homeowners. Successful applicants do not have to pay back the loan if they live in their homes for five years after being accepted into the program.

In order to be eligible for the NIP program, your household must meet a number of criteria including the following:

- You must own your home and have lived in it for five years.
- Property taxes must be paid and the home must be insured.
- You have not received any other home rehab loan from the city.
- You must provide proof of income and copies of utility bills.

Here are examples of income guidelines for the program. They are based on the number of people in the household:

- 1 person, \$23,500
- 2 persons, \$26,900
- 4 persons, \$33,600

If you are interested in applying for the NIP program, please contact the **Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation** at 286-5618.

Citizens Work Together to Prevent Crime

"We cannot be afraid to get involved, it is the only way to maintain and improve our neighborhoods," said Ald. Hamilton. One way to get involved is through the **Block Watch program**, which provides residents with specific information on how to reduce or eliminate opportunities for crime. And it works. Ald. Hamilton said the community crime prevention program can make a difference, and with crime being a major issue in the district, he would like to see more citizens becoming involved.

"Get to know your neighborhood and your neighbors and become proactive in improving our quality of life," said Ald. Hamilton. He said residents can play an important role as they look out for and help their neighbors and report any suspicious occurrences, vehicles or people to police. To become involved in a Block Watch you can contact the alderman's office at 286-2228 for information or call the community liaison officer for the **4th Police District** at 935-7248.

Anti-Violence Campaign Planned

Public safety in the City of Milwaukee is among the highest priorities of Ald. Hamilton as he works to maintain safe and secure neighborhoods. With continuing violence, especially gun-related violence in various neighborhoods, Ald. Hamilton was the co-sponsor of a resolution to develop an anti-violence campaign.

"The resources and leadership to implement an anti-violence plan that secures and enhances a positive quality of life are present in Milwaukee," said Ald. Hamilton. "Such a plan can also challenge the negative and destructive behaviors of the few," he added.

In two years of experience with Boston, Massachusetts' anti-violence plan known as "Operation Ceasefire," the city realized a 71% decrease in homicides by persons ages 24 and under and a 70% reduction in gun assaults for all ages. Our mayor and chief of police were asked to submit the anti-violence campaign to the Common Council by early next year.

Council Beats State-Imposed Tax "Freeze"

Final City Tax Rate Lowest in 50 years

The Milwaukee Common Council considered a wide array of budget amendments to the proposal sent to it by the mayor. After many hours of deliberation, aldermen voted 14-1 to adopt a 2007 city budget that requires a tax rate of \$7.99 per \$1,000 of assessed value – a level not seen since 1956.

"Our goal was to hold the line on taxes and spending while maintaining the important and necessary city services that our constituents want to maintain our quality of life," said Ald. Hamilton. The council has now adopted city budgets with flat or reduced tax rates in 17 of the last 18 years. Ald. Hamilton said residents can know that the council is doing its job to keep a reasonable level of city services while keeping taxes to a minimum.

The new city tax levy, with the lowest percentage tax levy increase of any of the taxing bodies that are included on city property tax bills, means the owner of a \$100,000 home would see a \$76 decrease in the city portion of the tax bill, from \$875 to \$799. The budget was more than \$107,000 under the state-imposed property tax "freeze."

Some highlights of the budget:

- Restored firefighting staffing for three ladder companies.
- Added 40 police officers
- Created a \$2.5 million fund to develop affordable housing
- Rejected effort to impose \$20 fee for lost/stolen garbage carts
- Add investigators to Fire & Police Commission to look into allegations of police misconduct.

Police Step Up Curfew Enforcement

When young people are out on the streets late at night they can get in trouble or become victims of crime. Ald. Hamilton wants to remind parents that in order to cut down on the amount of violence involving Milwaukee youth, police are giving extra attention to enforcing the city’s curfew.

By city law, through Memorial Day, children under the age of 17 are not allowed on the streets from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. Friday and Saturday. The teens or their parents can be given a ticket for violating the curfew. The fine is \$74 for a juvenile and \$175 for an adult.

Vital Free Tax Help For Low Income Families

Income tax time will be here before you know it, and Ald. Hamilton wants to remind working-poor families that they may be missing out on special tax credits that could give them a lump-sum payment of several thousand dollars. The **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** has been praised by many as one of the country’s most effective anti-poverty programs.

“As valuable as the EITC is, many people make mistakes in claiming it and others fail to claim it or don’t bother to file a tax return at all,” said Ald. Hamilton. “The amount of money that can come back to a household may be just what’s needed to take a family out of a poverty situation and give them the necessary money to pay for basic needs,” he said.

Last season more than 10,000 tax forms were filled out at no charge for Milwaukee County residents through the **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program**, with more than \$10 million coming back in tax refunds and credits. The Milwaukee Asset Building Coalition coordinates VITA program sites in Milwaukee. Tax preparers complete basic tax returns for low- to moderate-income (generally, \$39,000 and below) residents, elderly and disabled taxpayers free of charge.

For more information on the program or location of VITA sites please call the Milwaukee Asset Building Coalition at 906-2807.



Alderman Helps Remove Neighborhood “Eyesore”

Ald. Hamilton partnered with a nearby private contractor to clean up a privately owned property at 4131 N. 31st. St. which had become a neighborhood dumping ground. The contractor, **Milwaukee Materials**, is owned by a Milwaukee entrepreneur who plans to remove most of the concrete at the site and crush it at a neighborhood recycling facility.

“By working together the public and private sectors cleaned a site which both have an interest in,” said Ald. Hamilton. “This property was not meant to be a landfill, and cleaning it up makes the neighborhood more attractive for homeowners and businesses.”

Department of Public Works employees cleared the lot and Milwaukee Materials removed the debris. The costs of the joint clean-up effort, estimated at several thousand dollars, were charged to the property owner, Ald. Hamilton said.

I Need Your Input

Please take a moment to complete this card and mail it to my office. Should you have any other comments, questions or suggestions, please let me know. Hearing from you is important to me!

What is your opinion of the following city services?

Check one:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Garbage Collection				
Street Repair				
Street Lighting				
Police/Fire Protection				
Snow Plowing				
How am I doing?				

The City of Milwaukee has free, informative printed materials that I would be happy to send you. Please check off those you would like to receive.

☐ Call For Action (governmental phone directory)

☐ Milwaukee City Government & How It Works

☐ Postcards of City Hall

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Mail to: Alderman Hamilton, City Hall Room 205,
200 E. Wells St., Milwaukee, WI 53202

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD HAPPENINGS

Ald. Helps Kids Get Back To School

Not everyone can afford the pencils, notebooks and other materials children need to do their best in the classroom. So some residents in the 1st District asked Ald. Hamilton if he might be able to help the kids who were going back to school this fall. Working with the **Salvation Army**, Ald. Hamilton was able to provide 40 backpacks filled with school supplies for children in the area.



The distribution of backpacks took place at a neighborhood block party in the 6400 block of N. Long Island Dr. "I thank the Salvation Army for stepping up to help some needy children," said Ald. Hamilton. "The backpacks and school supplies helped make this the best school year ever for some deserving children."



COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD HAPPENINGS

2006 Villard Avenue Day Festival

"Catch the Feeling, Catch the Vibe"

It was another day of fun, food, entertainment and health services at "Catch the Feeling, Catch the Vibe," the 2006 Villard Avenue Day Festival held in August in the 3500 to 3700 blocks of W. Villard Ave. The neighborhood get together was founded by Ald. Hamilton and is supported by city, business and community groups. "It was another great opportunity for neighbors to gather and check out all the positive progress and developments along W. Villard Ave.," said Ald. Hamilton.



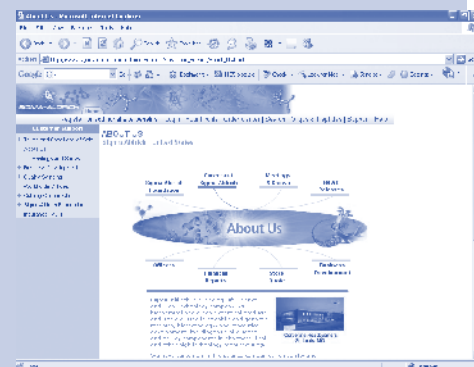
SIGMA-ALDRICH

Good Jobs Available In The District!

Looking for work? A way to save money on gas? Ald. Hamilton wants you to know that Sigma-Aldrich, which has moved the majority of its Milwaukee operations to 6000 N. Teutonia Ave., has many job opportunities in their distribution and packaging departments. Minimum requirements are a high school diploma or equivalent.

Sigma-Aldrich produces and distributes chemical products that are used in scientific research, pharmaceutical development, diagnosis of disease and other high technology manufacturing. It has over 7,200 employees around the world.

Applicants can apply in person on Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. To view all current openings at Sigma-Aldrich and specific job requirements you can go online at www.sigma-aldrich.com and select About Us & Careers.





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Happy Holidays!

Winter Garbage Cart Collection

Because sanitation crews who collect garbage and recyclables also plow snow, collection days may change during the winter, especially after a heavy snowstorm or especially frigid temperatures.

- Christmas & New Year's collection schedule: No garbage or recycling collection on Friday, Dec. 22 through Dec. 25 and Friday, Dec. 29, through Jan. 1, 2007.
- No collection on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Jan. 15, 2007.

After these holidays, the day of garbage collection moves one day later in the week. There is no change in the collection of recyclables after the holiday. Remember also that if you have curbside collection, schedule changes for households without alleys began Monday, Dec. 4, 2006. Sanitation crews collect the carts from their storage areas. This affects about half of the 210,000 households in Milwaukee. Extra items must still be placed curbside for pickup. Households with alleys are not required to change their procedures since they are emptied at the alley line.

Winter hours are in effect at the city's two Self Help Centers, 6660 N. Industrial Rd. and 3879 W. Lincoln Ave. Monday-Saturday, 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. No Sunday hours.

Visit me on the web at:
www.milwaukee.gov/district1

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Winter Parking Restrictions

Winter parking restrictions in the City of Milwaukee went into effect on December 1. Parked and abandoned cars are the single biggest problem in snow plowing. Motorists should look for signs describing the parking restrictions along streets that are affected by winter rules. These possible restrictions could include:

- **Specific Side Parking** - No parking on one or both sides of the street Dec. 1 - March 1. No parking on one or both sides of a street during a particular winter month, such as December or January.
- **4" Rule** - Certain residential streets are posted "No Parking When 4" of Snow or More." No parking is allowed on the side of the street where the sign is posted until snow has been removed.
- **Route Towaway Zone** - No parking is allowed during declared snow emergencies on highways marked with "Snow Route Towaway Zone" signs.

• Night Parking During Snow

Emergency - If a snow emergency has been declared, night parking regulations are in effect from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on all city streets regardless of the winter parking regulation.

- **Milwaukee Public Schools** make some playgrounds and parking lots available for overnight parking during declared snow emergencies and clean-up periods. Call the **DPW Information Center** at **286-8282** for the location of a playground nearest your home.

Some winter parking regulations are not posted. If you are unsure about regulations in your area, and want information on a particular street, call the **DPW Parking Enforcement Section** at **286-8350**. Streets are also listed on the **Department of Public Works** section of the city web site, www.city.milwaukee.gov under parking services.

Shovel Your Sidewalk. *It's The Law*

Remember that residential and commercial property owners and occupants are required to clear sidewalks abutting their property of snow or ice within 24 hours after a storm. If violations are reported, a 24-hour notice is issued. If the sidewalks still are not cleared, a sanitation crew will clear a path and put the charge on the property tax bill. **Note: the city does not plow alleys.**

If you have elderly or disabled neighbors who need help with snow shoveling – please help them out when you can.

And make our city safer by shoveling out the fire hydrants near your home. Ald. Hamilton says "adopting" a fire hydrant will ensure maximum visibility for fire-fighters in the event of an emergency.